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Lodge's Second Tour

*Back in Saigon as Envoy, He Profits
From Assessment of His Earlier Work*

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Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Nov. 11—Henry Cabot Lodge returned to Saigon in August with two important assets—the experience of having been Ambassador to South Vietnam for a year and the experience of not having been Ambassador for about a year after that. A friend quotes him as having said that “having been

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Ambassador to Vietnam is pretty good training for being Ambassador,” but Mr. Lodge is also grateful for “having had a year in the snowdrifts of New England to think.”

In the 14 months of private life that he enjoyed between his first assignment as Ambassador here and his present tour of duty, he had a privilege that few policy-makers can enjoy—adequate time to re-examine his performance, ideas and prejudices and time to seek out other wise men with time to think.

The results have been novel and encouraging. Unlike most American Ambassadors, Mr. Lodge is not merely attempting to carry out a policy; he is also conducting a seminar on how to improve that policy.

Complaints Get a Hearing

Since his return there has been a new emphasis on creativity in plans and operations. There has been a willingness to listen to those who feel that policy has not always worked properly, as well as to the more numerous optimists.

It was Mr. Lodge's idea that Edward G. Lansdale and his protégés be brought back to Vietnam. Mr. Lansdale had been lost to public service after his retirement from the Air Force with the rank of major general, but even earlier he had been virtually barred from Vietnam as had some of his former assistants.

Mr. Lansdale's record as a political adviser to Governments in the Philippines and in Vietnam, according to informed sources, led Mr. Lodge to believe that the United States

could not afford not to use him again.

Mr. Lansdale has thus been quietly serving as Mr. Lodge's special assistant for pacification. As nearly as can be determined Mr. Lansdale has been advising the Vietnamese and helping to examine new ideas from the American mission.

Consultants Make Visits

Before leaving Washington Mr. Lodge had been asked by President Johnson to get some other likely consultants to come to Vietnam for short visits. The first of these, a Harvard political scientist, Henry A. Kissinger, has come and gone and will be reporting to a number of top officials in Washington.

Mr. Lodge has also had dinner with each of the 44 American aid mission province representatives—the men who work in the field to distribute aid and to advise Vietnamese province chiefs.

According to knowledgeable sources, the Ambassador has deliberately left open channels through which even the most junior Americans in Vietnam can communicate privately with him.

The presence of large numbers of American combat troops in Vietnam has shifted public attention almost entirely to the military part of the American mission. But Mr. Lodge is still the head of the United States mission team.

Every indication is that reasonable harmony for such a large mission has been maintained and that Mr. Lodge has labored to increase cooperation and reduce competition.

For instance, the informed sources say, he has recently been devoting time to attempting to keep American agencies, each with a program needing Vietnamese administrators, from raiding each others' small pools of trained, able Vietnamese officials.

In his first term as Ambassador, from the summer of 1963 to the summer of 1964, Mr. Lodge was also considered a success but he was unpopular with some American subordinates because of what they believed to be his almost obsessive secrecy—a tendency to keep the business of the Embassy in his hat.

Mr. Lodge now operates, reliable sources say, in a more formal and normal way but the most common criticism is that he is still a “loner” unused to directing a huge bureaucracy.

It is also sometimes said that his directions are far less clear than those of his predecessor. However, reliable source remarks, however,

that this is because Mr. Lodge is a “political” person who sees the need to persuade divergent groups subtly to agree and dislikes ordering them to adopt a common policy on his say-so alone.

Mr. Lodge's arrival last summer was viewed with some apprehension by the Vietnamese generals who run the country because of unfounded rumors that he would demand the return of civilian government and, more important, because of his reputation as a very strong man who had clashed with the strong-willed late President Ngo Dinh Diem.

But Mr. Lodge has been careful to prove these fears groundless and appears to have an acceptable relationship with Premier Nguyen Cao Ky and other Vietnamese leaders. Both Ambassador Lodge's and Premier Ky's remarks on the need for a social revolution to give the peasant and worker a better life are virtually interchangeable—a statement by one sounds like a statement by the other.

Mr. Lodge is above all a realist about Vietnam and those close to him say that he feels not only that victory is far away but that the program that will lead to a real political victory over the Vietcong has not yet been formulated.

But the search that began as he sat alone in his study in Beverly, Mass., amid the snowdrifts of New England, is still under way and at an increased pace.

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